

**United States Senate**  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 4, 2014

The Honorable Mark L. Pryor, Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and  
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Roy Blunt, Ranking Member  
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and  
Drug Administration, and Related Agencies  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pryor and Ranking Member Blunt:

As the Subcommittee begins to develop its upcoming Fiscal Year (FY) 2015 Appropriations legislation, we respectfully request your consideration of the needs of our nation's network of food banks and other emergency food providers, many of which are struggling to meet sustained high levels of demand while facing increased costs for purchasing and transporting food.

We ask that you include full funding of \$324 million for The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) commodity purchases, as mandated by the 2014 Farm Bill. In addition, we ask that you provide the full authorized level of \$100 million for TEFAP Storage and Distribution funding to help food banks and emergency feeding agencies with the rising costs of storing, transporting, and distributing foods to the needy. We also urge the Subcommittee to work with the Secretary of Agriculture to identify opportunities for increasing the supply of TEFAP commodities in the coming fiscal year, through bonus and specialty crop purchases. This is particularly important given the significant declines in TEFAP bonus purchases.

The following factors have been exerting strong pressures on the nation's emergency food assistance system:

- Demand for emergency food remains high in communities all across America. According to Feeding America's study "Hunger in America 2010," more than 37 million people – one in eight Americans – receive emergency food each year through the nation's network of food banks and the agencies they serve. The findings represent a staggering 46 percent increase since 2006.
- With millions of Americans finding reemployment at reduced hours or wages, the need for food assistance remains high and food banks are hard pressed to meet need in their communities.
- TEFAP Storage and Distribution's current funding level of \$49 million only covers 33 percent of the cost of distributing TEFAP commodities – leaving food banks to bridge the gap and taking money away from vital programs to do so. When TEFAP storage and distribution funds fall short of what is needed to distribute TEFAP foods to clients, the result is that food banks often must use donated funds to help, meaning less services for clients in need. Chronic underfunding

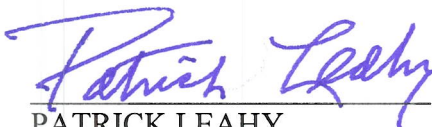
of TEFAP storage and distribution has resulted in millions of potential meals not delivered to clients in need.

- The combination of higher commodity prices and reduced availability of bonus commodities will continue to significantly impact the ability of food banks to meet demand at a time when the need for emergency food assistance remains at record levels. In FY2013, TEFAP foods represented 20 percent of the 3.6 billion pounds of food distributed by Feeding America food banks. These figures include commodity purchases mandated by the 2008 Farm Bill as well as bonus commodity purchases made by USDA when necessitated by market conditions. Unfortunately for food banks, as a result of strong agriculture markets, USDA purchased 24 percent *less* of bonus commodities in FY2013, resulting in a decrease for food banks of TEFAP deliveries in 2014. With agriculture markets projected to remain strong throughout FY2014, this decline in bonus commodities is expected to continue through at least the current fiscal year.

Providing the mandated funding level for TEFAP commodities in addition to fully funding the authorized amount of \$100 million for TEFAP Storage and Distribution is critical if our emergency feeding agencies are to serve the growing numbers of people coming to them for help. We want to specifically highlight that sustained high demand coupled with declining state and local resources are making it increasingly difficult to cover these costs. Food banks are having to make the difficult choices to take funds designated for food purchases and spend then on TEFAP food distribution. It would be unfortunate if local emergency feeding agencies had to close their doors because of a shortage of USDA commodities or because of lack of funding to safely store and distribute those foods.

We appreciate your consideration of our request for full funding for TEFAP Commodities and for TEFAP Storage and Distribution funds. We look forward to working with you on these and other pressing issues before the Subcommittee. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



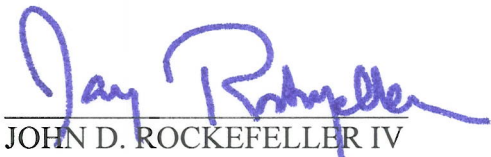
PATRICK LEAHY  
United States Senator



SHELDON WHITEHOUSE  
United States Senator



ROBERT P. CASEY, Jr.  
United States Senator



JOHN D. ROCKEFELLER IV  
United States Senator

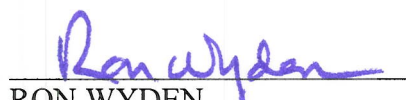




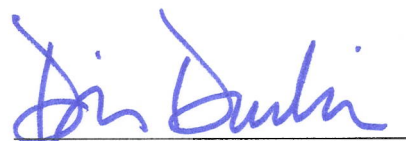
JACK REED  
United States Senator



JEANNE SHAHEEN  
United States Senator




RON WYDEN  
United States Senator




RICHARD J. DURBIN  
United States Senator



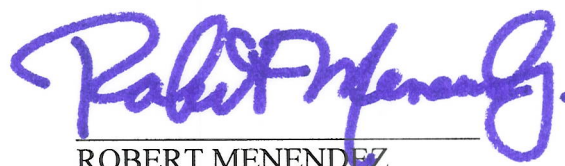
KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND  
United States Senator




BRIAN SCHATZ  
United States Senator



TAMMY BALDWIN  
United States Senator



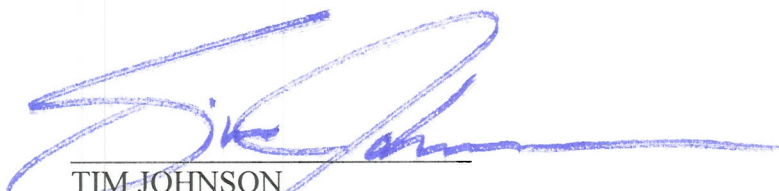
ROBERT MENENDEZ  
United States Senator




CHARLES E. SCHUMER  
United States Senator



AL FRANKEN  
United States Senator

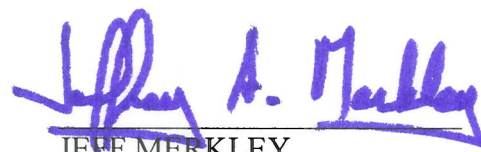



TIM JOHNSON  
United States Senator

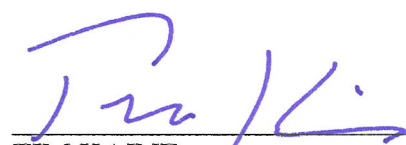


BENJAMIN L. CARDIN  
United States Senator

  
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL  
United States Senator


  
JEFF MERKLEY  
United States Senator


  
SHERROD BROWN  
United States Senator

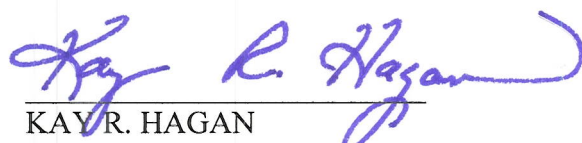
  
TIM KAINE  
United States Senator

  
MAZIE R. HIRONO  
United States Senator

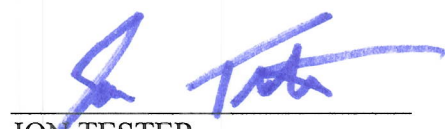
  
JOE MANCHIN III  
United States Senator

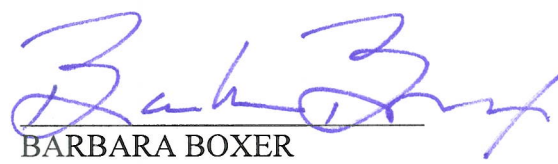
  
MARK R. WARNER  
United States Senator

  
ELIZABETH WARREN  
United States Senator

  
KAY R. HAGAN  
United States Senator

  
CHRISTOPHER MURPHY  
United States Senator

  
JON TESTER  
United States Senator

  
BARBARA BOXER  
United States Senator

The Emergency Food Assistance Program  
April 4, 2014  
Page 5



---

CARL LEVIN  
United States Senator



---

BERNARD SANDERS  
United States Senator